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For more information

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

A Flu Shot Now Can Protect You Through the Spring!
Flu Season Begins in October

It's that time of the year again - time to get flu shots! Remember an influenza (flu) shot now can protect you and your family through the spring! Annual flu shots are recommended for all persons aged 60 years and older and anyone with a chronic illness such as heart disease, diabetes, and asthma. These groups are especially at risk for flu - related pneumonia and bronchitis. Others at high risk for flu include anyone with a weakened immune system, women who are pregnant, and infants and children ages six months to their fifth birthday. Healthcare workers and caregivers of high risk people also need flu shots to protect their patients. For more information about flu clinics in San Bernardino County visit the Public Health website at www.sbcounty.gov/dph or call the Immunization Program at **(800) 722-4794**, Monday through Friday from 8 AM - 5 PM.

This year medical experts recommend all children six months to five years of age get an annual flu shot. Recent studies indicate children of these ages are as likely to develop serious complications from flu as people in other high-risk groups. Additionally anyone living or caring for a child under five years or an adult over 60 years, including household members, day care providers and teachers, should get the flu shot as well.

Flu is more than a very bad cold. It is a serious lung disease caused by influenza viruses. Having the flu means not only being sick, but losing time from work if you are ill or care for ill family members. Every year in the United States, approximately 200,000 people are hospitalized and 36,000 people die because of flu and related complications. In California, there are about 1,600 hospitalizations and 300 deaths during the flu season. A flu shot now can protect you and your family through the spring!

A new shot is recommended every fall since the vaccine changes yearly. The 2007-2008 flu vaccine protects against the three strains of influenza virus expected to cause disease this winter, which are: A/Solomon Islands/3/2006 (H1N1)-like, A/Wisconsin/67/2005 (H3N2)-like, and B/Malaysia/2506/2004-like viruses.

The Department of Public Health sponsors low cost flu clinics throughout San Bernardino County beginning in mid October. The cost of the flu shot is \$5.00. For clinic locations and times visit the Public Health website at www.sbcounty.gov/dph or call the Immunization Program at **(800) 722-4794**, Monday through Friday from 8 AM - 5 PM.

Protect yourself from flu this year! A flu shot now can protect you and your family through the spring! Come to a low cost flu clinic near you.